

# Sega slap seven writs on Italian copiers

**ARMED** security guards stood alongside video games at an international trade show in Italy last week. In a well organized legal assault, two Italian attorneys and a court official slapped restriction orders on seven different companies exhibiting at the Milan Fair, leaving a security guard on each stand to ensure offending equipment was not tampered with.

The action was brought about by Sega Enterprises, the company's European Managing Director Vic Leslie having spent almost two weeks in Italy preparing the case. Sega successfully obtained restriction orders against seven companies in the Court of Milan, sufficient for them to obtain photographic and written evidence through an appointed court official relating to infringed copyright on their games, Frogger and Zaxxon.

In granting the orders the Milan judge implied he recognized copyright existed in video games.

The action took place on Thursday last week, a day before the fifth Milan Fair was to close, and took thousands of visitors as well as the considerable number of exhibitors in the amusement

By **GERRY WISE**

games section of the massive show completely by surprise.

Although Atari had previously taken action in Italy in respect of copying of their successful Centipede game following last year's Eureka show in Rome; and at last year's Milan Fair Summit Com issued warnings relating to alleged copies of the Konami Scramble, this was the first time an actual order had been served on

anyone in the Italian industry during a trade show.

The companies served with restriction orders were: B.E.M. Srl of Milan; World Electronic Co. of Rimini; Di. Co. Ma. of Padova; HB Fiberglass Line of Brindisi; D.G.M. of Milan; Domino Electronics of Rimini; and Elektronika Srl of Firenze.

Further orders relating to equipment exhibited through

other companies were also being sought, it gathered.

Although Sega's action caught many by surprise it was generally welcomed throughout the Italian trade. The obtaining of a restriction order is being acknowledged as a great triumph in the copyright battle, the Milan judge having implied there is an infringement of a copyright work.

The restriction order basically allowed Sega's Italian attorneys to take photographic evidence of the screens and boards and to take written evidence through a judiciary officer of the Milan Court. Sega's attorneys, Dr. Carlo Pavoni and Maurizio Bernaschi of Parma e Ansaldo, then had eight days in which to present a case in the Court of Milan, in which the evidence taken at the Milan Fair can be presented as proof of any claim.

Sega's attorneys left the Milan Fair confident that a good day's work was just the start of a successful action bound to have the right effect on the Italian video games manufacturing industry.

Mario Zaccaria, Sega's main distributor in Italy, applauded the action, hoping it would have a vital impact in the industry not only in his country but throughout Europe.

The pictures on this page show the attorneys leaving writs on B.E.M. of Milan, left, and World Electronic Co.

